

Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5852

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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DEPT PASS USINT CAIRO

EO 11652: NA DECON 1/2/75

TAGS: PINS PFOR XF

SUBJ: FEDAYEEN FERMENT RE PARTICIPATION IN ME PEACE SETTLEMENT

REF: BEIRUT 14619 AND 14667

SUMMARY: INTRA-FEDAYEEN CONTROVERSY OVER PUTATIVE PLO POSITION
RE GENEVA TALKS AND ME SETTLEMENT EFFORT APPEARS TO BE HEIGHTENING.
PLO/FATAH LEADERSHIP STILL SEEMS DESIROUS OF ASSOCIATING ITSELF WITH
SETTLEMENT EFFORT, PARTICULARLY IF PROGRESS IS MADE AT GENEVA, AND
FATAH NO. 2 SALAH KHALAF RECENTLY CONFIRMED THIS IN CLEAREST
TERMS TO DATE. END SUMMARY.

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1. AS FOLLOW-ON TO DEVELOPMENTS REPORTED REFTELS, PAST WEEK

WITNESSED BEGINNING OF UNUSUAL FLURRY OF INTERVIEWS, PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES BY WIDE RANGE OF FEDAYEEN LEADERS ON SUBJ OF FEDAYEEN ASSOCIATION WITH PEACEFUL ME SETTLEMENT. PFLP, SA'IRQ, AFL AND PFLP/GC HARD-LINERS HAVE PREDICTABLY CONTINUED AGITATE AGAINST GENEVA CONF, SECRETARY KISSINGER AND ALL HIS WORKS. ON OTHER HAND, PLO/FATAH LEADERSHIP GIVES EVERY SIGN OF PRESSING DISCREETLY AHEAD WITH PLAN TO KEEP OPTIONS OPEN FOR EVENTUAL FEDAYEEN PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA AND FOR ACCEPTANCE OF INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE IN WEST BANK/GAZA. GIVEN STRONG ANTI-SETTLEMENT SENTIMENT AMONG RANK-AND-FILE, MOST FEDAYEEN "MODERATES" TEND TO COUCH THEIR VIEWS IN ELLIPTICAL--ALMOST OPAQUE--TERMS, BUT MESSAGE COMES THROUGH NONETHELESS.

2. IN THIS ATMOSPHERE OF HEIGHTENED CONTROVERSY AND SUSPICION, ONLY STATEMENT WORTH REPORTING IN ANY DETAIL WAS SPEECH DELIVERED HERE DEC 31 BY FATAH'S SALAH KHALAF. IN IT, HE CASTIGATED OPPONENTS OF FEDAYEEN PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA AND CAME CLOSER THAN ANY OTHER FEDAYEEN LEADER (WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF PDFLP'S HAWATMEH) T PUBLICLY ESPOUSING ACCEPTANCE OF PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT--*LBEIT AS "TACTICAL" STEP ON ROAD TO "LIBER *TION" OF*ALL OF PALESTINE. KHALAF STATED THAT DEVELOPM*NTS SINCE OCT WAR, ESPECIA LY TREND TO ARD PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT AND REVITALIZATION OF SC RES 242, HAVE CONFRONTED FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT WITH THREE CHOICES: (A) INSISTING ON PROLONGED TOTAL LIBERATION WAR AGAINST IS*AEL AND IGNORING ARAB GOVTS' DESIRE TO REGAIN TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN 1967; (B) PERMITTING WEST BANK/GAZA TO FALL UNDER JORDANIAN CONTROL; OR (C) ASSOCIATING ITSELF WITH SETTLEMENT EFFORT IN ORDER GAIN SECURE FOOTHOLD INSIDE PALESTINE. HE LEFT NO DOUBT THAT PLO/FATAH LEADERSHIP FAVORS LATTER.

3. KHALAF URGED PALESTINIANS TO VIEW GENEVA CONF FROM "ARAB NATIONAL STANDPOINT", NOT FROM PURELY SELFISH "REGIONAL" ONE. "IF ARABS CAN GO TO GENEVA", HE SAID, "THERE NO REASON WHY PALESTINIANS CANNOT GO ALSO". RESPONDING TO CRITICS WHO HAVE "MISINTERPRETED" FATAH'S "REALISTIC" POSITION AS "BETRAYAL OF OUR GOAL OF LIBERATING ALL OF PALESTINE" OR AS SIGN THAT "TIRED" FATAH LEADERS ARE "CHASING AFTER MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIOS", KHALAF ASKED: "ISN'S REGAINING A SMALL PART OF PALESTINE, EVEN ONLY 23 PER CENT, A PHASED ACCOMPLISHMENT?"

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4. IN TACIT ADMISSION OF SPLIT WHICH FEDAYEEN CONTROVERSY OVER GENEVA CONF HAS PROVOKED WITHIN PLO, KHALAF PLEADED FOR COMMANDO UNIT AND PROMISED FATAP WOULD DO ITS UTMOST TO FOSTER "CALM" INTRA-FEDAYEEN DIUCUSSION THAT WOULD SOLVE MATTE*S SATISFACTORILY. "OUR MOVEMENT", HE SAID, "CANNOT AFFORD A SPLIT BETWEEN REJECTIONISTS AND THOSE WHO ACCEP" ASSOCIATION WITH SETTLEMENT EFFORT. KHALAF THEN WENT ON TO BERATE KING HUSSEIN, CHARGING HIM WITH, INTER ALIA, BEING PART OF AMERICAN-ISRAELI PLOT TO ISOLATE

PALESTINIANS POLITICALLY AND INSURE THEIR ABSENCE FROM*GENEVA.

5. COMMENT: EVIDENTALLY STUNG BY PFLP, ALF AND SA'IQA CHARGES (BEING CIRCULATED PUBLICLY AND RAISED IN STORMY PLO EX COMM SESSIONS) THAT FATAH'S ADVOCACY OF "PHASED" OR "TACTICAL" APPROACH TO ACHIEVEMENT OF PLO GOALS IS TANTAMOUNT TO "SURRENDER" OR "APPEASEMENT", KHALAF APPEARED TO BE WARNING FEDAYEEN HARD-LINERS AGAINST PUSHING THEIR OPPOSITION TO CURRENT POLICIES OF 'ARAFAT AND CO. BEYOND ALL LIMITS. WE CONTINUE RECEIVE CLEAR INDICATIONS THAT PLO FATAH LEADERSHIP IS PREPARED COMPROMISE FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT'S MORE EXTREME GOALS IN RETURN FOR ROLE IN ME PEACE SETTLEMENT AND FUTURE PALESTINIAN ENTITY, AND IS WAITING FOR GENEVA TALKS TO PRODUCE TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS TOWARD THOSE OBJECTIVES. AT SAME TIME, 'ARAFAT AND CO REMAIN AWARE OF DIFFICULTIES WHICH PFLP, SA'IQA AND ALF AGITATION AMONG YOUNGER FEDAYEEN RANK-AND-FILE, WHOSE PERCEPTIONS ALREADY REFLECT STEADY DIET OF HATE-PROPAGANDA FED TO THEM IN REFUGEE CAMPS OVER PAST 25 YEARS, CAN CAUSE FOR THEM IN WEEKS AHEAD.
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